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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 72/NO. 48 DECEMBER 8, 2008

INSIDE

Cuban militant René González: my experience in defending Angola

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Federal trials begin for Guantánamo prisoners

BY DOUG NELSON

A federal judge ruled November 20 on the incarceration of six Algerians held without charges for nearly seven years by the United States in Guantánamo. This is the first time a civilian court has held a hearing on the evidence against prisoners incarcerated there.

In a closed courtroom, U.S. District Judge Richard Leon upheld the jailing of one of the six, Belkacem Bensayah, but decided the U.S. government had to release the other five: Lakhdar Boumediene, Mohamed Nechla, Hadj Boudella, Mustafa Ait Idir, and Saber Lahmar.

The Justice Department claims the six men had planned to fight U.S. and allied forces in Afghanistan based on hearsay from one unnamed source. In the case of Bensayah, the judge ruled that the U.S. government had backed up its allegation to his satisfaction with additional secret evidence.

The government was not required to prove Bensayah's guilt, but to provide a "preponderance of evidence"—the lowest level of burden of proof. Judge

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Bailout for Citigroup, more layoffs for workers

BY SETH GALINSKY

The U.S. government bailed out Citigroup, one of the largest banks in the United States, November 23. With $2 trillion listed on its books, the bank is heavily involved with almost every other large financial institution in the world.

The bailout includes the purchase of $20 billion of preferred stock and government guarantees for $306 billion in potential losses. Citicorp received $25 billion as part of the broader bailout of banks earlier in the fall.

Prior to the bailout announcement Citigroup stock had plummeted to its lowest price in more than a decade, closing at $3.77 November 21. Citigroup holds billions of dollars of collateralized debt obligations: repackaged mortgages and other debts. Even after writing off billions in debts, the bank still holds $20 billion of mortgage-linked securities and $122 billion of "assets" linked to credit card debt.

Like home mortgages, credit card

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Socialists kick off 2009 mayoral bids

Offer working-class alternative to capitalism

Star Ledger/Mitsu Yusakawa; Inset: Militant/Naomi Craine

Dan Fein (top), 2009 Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of New York, addresses truckers protesting high fuel prices in April. James Harris (inset), Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Los Angeles, has just been certified for ballot.

BY CINDY JAQUITH

NEW YORK—The Socialist Workers Party here has nominated Dan Fein, a sewing machine operator, as its candidate in the 2009 mayoral race. James Harris, a union meat packer, is the SWP candidate for mayor in Los Angeles.

The two SWP candidates are calling for workers to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist class in order to defend themselves from mounting layoffs; cuts in transit, health care, and schools; greater assaults on workers rights; and the consequences of Washington's expanding war in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The socialist campaigns are being launched just weeks after the close of the 2008 presidential race, in which SWP candidates received a warm response from working people and youth to their advocacy of a revolutionary struggle to replace capitalist rule.

Fein, 63, is running against billionaire Michael Bloomberg, a Republican

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Venezuela book fair: big rise in sales shows thirst for reading

BY MAGGIE TROWE

CARACAS, Venezuela—The Fourth Venezuela International Book Fair, held here November 7–16, registered substantially higher sales of books than last year, fair organizers reported.

The large and popular stand of the government-run Librerías del Sur (Bookstores of the South), which feature titles by Venezuelan publishers, sold more than 35,000 books, according to bookstore president Pedro Pérez.

By the end of November 15, Pérez reported, sales by all the stands at the fair—more than 100—reflected a 50 percent increase from the previous year.

Publishers and book vendors in the fair came from Venezuela and several other Latin American countries, as well as Pathfinder Press in the United States, the only U.S. publisher participating.

As well as browsing the books in the stands, the thousands of visitors had a choice of dozens of panel presentations, poetry readings, and musical performances to choose from every day. There was no charge for entrance to the fair or the events.

Many visitors had received *bono-libros*—coupons worth $7 each on book purchases given by government departments to employees—to add to their buying power. At food and coffee stands and at the large fountain at the center of the park, people had meals and snacks while they talked or read books they had bought.

This year's honored country, Ecuador, had a large stand with information about the country. Many programs and workshops featured Ecuadoran poets, writers, and musicians.

The fair's three-day central forum was titled "Books in the Building of Bolivarian Socialism." Moderators at these

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Militant/Maggie Trowe

Readers browse through Librerías del Sur stand at Fourth Venezuela International Book Fair in Caracas.

Socialist Workers Party-Building Fund approaches $90,000 goal

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Contributions to the Party-Building Fund of the Socialist Workers Party were $8,500 ahead of schedule as of the end of week seven of the drive. With $11,500 more needed to make the nationwide $90,000 goal, supporters in a number of cities are poised to go over their quotas.

Contributors are responding to new opportunities to build the communist movement in light of the economic crisis and workers' resistance to the growing assault on their jobs, working conditions, and social wage.

Contributions from Seattle al-

Continued on page 7

Final push is on in 'Militant' sub campaign

BY ANGEL LARISCY

As we enter the final days of the international campaign to win 2,400 new and long-term readers to the *Militant*, supporters of the paper are finding interest from workers resisting layoffs and pay cuts, undocumented immigrants fighting for legalization,

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Protests assail jail term of Aboriginal rights fighter

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—Aboriginal rights activist Lex Wotton was sentenced November 7 to six years in jail for "rioting with destruction." The charges stemmed from 2004 protests on Palm Island, in north Queensland, following the death in police custody of an Aboriginal man.

More than 100 people picketed outside the Sydney District Court to protest the sentence. "A white, murdering cop goes free and a man is in prison over destruction of property," said Jenny Munro, a longtime Aboriginal rights activist here.

The same day, about 100 people, including many of Wotton's family members dressed in Aboriginal colors of red, black, and yellow, protested outside the Townsville court in the state of Queensland where he was sentenced. Hundreds also protested in Brisbane and Melbourne. Pickets were held in Auckland and Wellington in New Zealand.

Prosecutors had sought a 10-year sentence against Wotton, a 40-year-old plumber and community leader. With time served, he will be eligible for parole by July 2010. Wotton will not appeal the sentence.

Wotton's mother, Agnes, told the *National Indigenous Times*, "I don't believe he should have served any more time. . . . But I'm glad he didn't get 10 years or life."

His brother-in-law, Raymond Sibley, the island's deputy mayor, said to the *Townsville Bulletin*, "They had an all-white jury, a white judge. It's typical Queensland law."

The protests on Palm Island erupted after Mulrunji Doomadgee, an Aboriginal, died from massive internal injuries Nov. 14, 2004, an hour after his arrest and beating by Sergeant Christopher Hurley. A coroner's report said cell video images of an unattended and dying Mulrunji "writhing in pain . . . were shocking."

A week later, when an initial autopsy report detailed his injuries but cleared the cops, tensions exploded among the 4,000 mainly indigenous Palm Island residents. Hundreds angrily protested outside the courthouse. A number of police buildings were later burned down.

Queensland police responded with a massive, heavily armed sweep across the island. Almost 30 Palm Island residents were arrested. Some were later jailed for a few weeks or up to two years. As Wotton was arrested, cops shot him in front of his children with a Taser gun. Wotton's mother and sister were also arrested, but the charges were dropped.

Under pressure from national protests and international publicity, the Queensland government was forced to put Hurley on trial. He became the first cop in the state ever charged over death of a Black in custody.

In 2007, an all-white jury cleared Hurley of manslaughter charges. He has subsequently received $100,000 in "damages." He is now appealing a 2006 coroner's report that found him responsible for the death. Both he and the cop who submitted a false report to cover up the murderous attack have since been promoted.

Four of the 19 Palm Island residents who faced trials were acquitted last year of similar "rioting" charges. One, William Blackman, told the *National Indigenous Times* that he is now "a marked man" in the eyes of the Townsville police. He has been beaten up by cops and convicted on other, lesser charges. Blackman says that Palm Islanders will continue their resistance to cop brutality.

In a provocative move by the Queensland government, 22 cops who were part of the police crackdown on Palm Island in 2004 received bravery awards in Townsville only four days before Wotton's sentencing.

Messages of solidarity can be sent to Wotton in jail by e-mail at: freelexwotton@gmail.com.

Fardod Roshanbin

March in Brisbane, Australia, November 1 to protest frame-up of Aboriginal activist Lex Wotton. On November 7 Wotton was sentenced to six years in prison on charges of "rioting with destruction" for his part in protests in 2004 against police killing of Mulrunji Doomadgee.

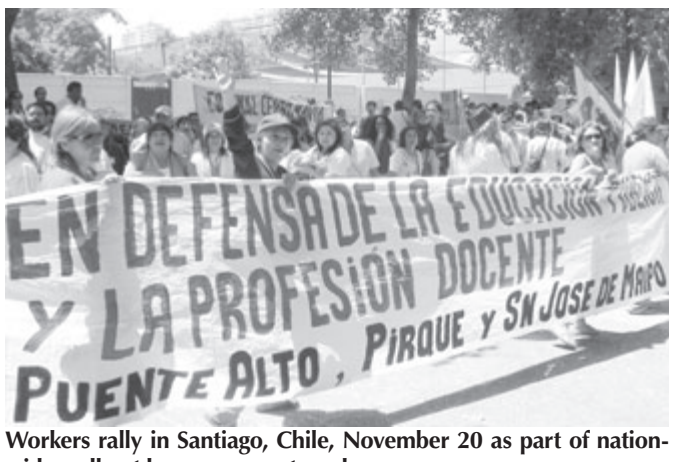
Chilean gov't workers strike, win 10 percent wage increase

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

After a four-day nationwide strike November 17–20, some 450,000 government workers in Chile won a 10 percent wage raise. Members of the National Public Employees Union (ANEF) and Central Workers Union (CUT) were demanding a 14.5 percent increase in pay. The government's initial offer of 6.5 percent prompted the walkout. Over the past year, the government's official cost-of-living figures have risen 9.9 percent.

The ANEF began strike actions a week earlier and were then joined by CUT members. Striking workers took to the streets, marching in most of the nation's major cities. In Valparaíso, Chile, nearly 30,000 public workers rallied outside Congress November 19, reported the *Valparaíso Times*. Teachers, garbage workers, as well as doctors and judges participated in the walkout.

Union officials, insisting that a wage increase had to be a double-digit figure, announced an end to the strike November 20 after Chile's Senate in a 32-0 vote approved a 10 percent raise. Hours earlier the Chamber of Deputies in a 98-4 vote rejected a 9.5 percent increase. The Senate's wage hike proposal "now returns to the lower house for a vote, where it is expected to pass," reported AP.



Workers rally in Santiago, Chile, November 20 as part of nationwide walkout by government workers.

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Minnesota students host Cuban Revolution forum

BY TONY LANE

MINNEAPOLIS—"In reading this book I was very impressed by the role Cuba played in Africa," said Dionne Dillard, referring to the internationalist mission carried out by more than 300,000 Cuban volunteer combatants in Angola from 1975 to 1991. Dillard, president of the Black Student Union at the University of Minnesota here, said that in the many courses she had taken on African studies there was no mention of revolutionary Cuba's role in aiding national liberation movements in Africa.

Dillard chaired a November 19 meeting at the University of Minnesota that discussed the book *Our History Is Still Being Written*: *The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*. The book, published by Pathfinder Press, tells the stories of Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sío Wong, three young Cubans of Chinese ancestry who became combatants in the revolutionary war to overthrow the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in the 1950s. All three rose to the rank of general in the Revolutionary Armed Forces and continue to play leading roles in Cuba's socialist revolution today.

The 125 people who attended the event, mostly students, heard Dillard; Jaleesa Joy, secretary of the Black Student Union; Kristen Talbert, secretary of the American Indian Student Cultural Center; political science professor August Nimtz; and Martín Koppel, one of the interviewers of the three generals for the book.

The sponsors of the meeting included the African American & African Studies department, Political Science department, African Student Association, American Indian Cultural Center, La Raza Student Cultural Center, and China Center, as well as the Minnesota Cuba Committee and Twin Cities Pathfinder Books.

Unlike the United States, Joy told the audience, in Cuba "education means being in control of your destiny . . . and that education is for life—that you will always be a student."

Talbert said she learned from the book how the Chinese who came to Cuba as indentured labor "fought alongside other Cubans in the independence war against Spain, and became viewed as equals."

Koppel outlined what Cuban workers and farmers have accomplished through their socialist revolution, from guaranteeing that no farmer will be evicted from the land they till and integrating women massively into the workforce and the leadership of society, to offering internationalist solidarity to people around the world.

He said the example of the Cuban Revolution is "needed in the world today, as working people face a crisis of production and employment that is only just beginning." The devastation this will mean for millions "poses the need for workers and farmers in the United States to take state power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and to run society in the interests of the vast majority, not for profit for a few."

Militant/Natalie Morrison

Panel at meeting on *Our History Is Still Being Written* at University of Minnesota November 19. From left to right: Dionne Dillard, president, Black Student Union; Martín Koppel, one of interviewers who prepared book; Kristen Talbert, secretary, American Indian Student Cultural Center; Jaleesa Joy, secretary, Black Student Union; August Nimtz, political science professor.

Nimtz explained how Cuba's revolutionary leadership has combated racism. "The principle means was the revolution itself," he said, overthrowing the profit system that relies on racism. The revolution also took concrete steps such as "banning discrimination in hiring and public facilities."

During the discussion period, a student wanted to know how the world economic crisis will affect Cuba. Another pointed to the increasing use of the capitalist market system in China and asked how that related to Cuba.

Koppel noted that Cuba, like other nations oppressed by imperialism, is impacted by the world capitalist crisis. He pointed out that semicolonial countries are hit by the falling prices for the raw materials they export. In China, the reliance on capitalist methods makes the country more vulnerable to the effects of this crisis.

What is different in Cuba, he said, "is that they have the most powerful weapon, a workers and farmers government, that defends the interests of working people—both at home and abroad." When confronted with crises, "the response of Cuba's revolutionary leadership has consistently been to turn to working people to organize to resolve the problems they face."

A number of students stayed for a reception after the meeting. Fidel Abbeh, originally from Togo, spoke about conditions facing working people in West Africa with Koppel, who was recently part of a fact-finding trip to Equatorial Guinea. Abbeh insisted that malaria, which is endemic in much of Africa, "should be history" but that the capitalist corporations had no interest in eradicating the disease because they see no profits in doing so.

Twelve Chinese students attended the meeting. When leaving at the end of the program, one remarked that she was pleasantly surprised by the fact that students in the United States were discussing socialism openly and in a favorable light.

'Militant' subscription drive

'Militant' Subscription Drive
Fall 2008 ♦ Sept. 27 – Nov. 23
Week 8 of 8

Country	Quota	Sold	%
UNITED STATES			
Miami	**160**	**165**	**103%**
Houston*	**100**	**102**	**102%**
San Francisco	**140**	**141**	**101%**
Twin Cities**	155	152	98%
Seattle	80	77	96%
Newark, NJ	125	115	92%
Washington, D.C.	95	86	91%
Des Moines, IA	125	111	89%
Atlanta	250	221	88%
Los Angeles	100	86	86%
Philadelphia	90	77	86%
New York	315	261	83%
Boston	60	48	80%
Chicago	100	80	80%
Other		8	
U.S. Total	1,895	1,730	91%
CANADA	125	110	88%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	**40**	**43**	**108%**
London	**80**	**81**	**101%**
UK Total	**120**	**124**	**103%**
NEW ZEALAND*	**85**	**87**	**102%**
AUSTRALIA*	65	62	95%
SWEDEN*	35	30	86%
Int'l Totals	**2,325**	**2,143**	**92%**
Should be	**2,400**	**2,400**	**100%**

* Raised quota **Raised quota twice

Continued from front page

and young people attracted to a paper that explains why capitalism cannot be reformed.

Two thousand Haitians and their supporters held a spirited rally in West Palm Beach, Florida, November 21 to demand an end to deportations and the granting of Temporary Protected Status to undocumented Haitians, which would allow them to live and work in the United States for a period of time. Seven people subscribed to the *Militant* at the demonstration, reports Deborah Liatos.

In other cities across the United States and around the world, *Militant* distributors at campaign tables and factory gates and on door-to-door teams are discussing with other workers the need for labor and its allies to take political power out of the hands of the ruling billionaires in order to combat the consequences of the capitalist economic crisis.

The eight-week campaign to increase readership of the paper ends this week. All subscriptions received by December 1 will be counted and recorded in the final chart, which will appear in next week's issue.

SWP mayoral campaigns

Continued from front page

who has now adopted the affiliation "independent" and is seeking a third term in office; U.S. Representative Anthony Weiner and City Comptroller William Thompson, both Democrats; and others.

Citing the spreading capitalist financial crisis, the New York State and city governments are laying plans for deep cuts in Medicaid programs, health care, and education. The Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) is proposing to raise fares as much as 25 percent while decreasing the number and frequency of trains and buses, eliminating some routes altogether, and cutting 2,800 transit jobs. The MTA says it has a $1.2 billion budget deficit.

"What they really mean is they don't have enough revenue to pay the wealthy bondholders," Fein said in an interview. "Those crooks deserve nothing! They rake off hundreds of millions of dollars in interest payments every year."

Working people in New York, he noted, "don't have chauffeurs to drive them around. My administration would oppose any increase in fares and would implement a public works program to improve the transportation system and hire more workers so we could *increase* service. Public transportation is a necessity for working people and should be free."

"The employers in New York and the Democratic and Republican politicians who serve their interests are trying to resolve their economic crisis by stealing more of the wealth we produce," Fein said. "But we're not the ones responsible for this crisis, they are!

"In self-defense, we need to organize more unions and use union power to fight layoffs, speedup, and lack of safety on the job. We need a labor party, based on combative unions, that will fight in our interests. But these are still not enough. We need to carry out a socialist revolution, involving millions of working people and youth, that will throw the propertied rulers out of government and replace them with workers and farmers."

Fein joined more than 2,000 workers who rallied in the town of Patchogue, New York, November 14 to condemn the lynching of Ecuadoran immigrant Marcelo Lucero. The socialist candidate brought back photographs of the demonstration to show to coworkers at the sewing shop where he works and to explain the need to legalize all undocumented workers.

Harris, who belongs to the United Food and Commercial Workers union, was the first candidate to file nominating petitions in the Los Angeles mayoral race and the first to be certified for the ballot. On December 20 Harris will participate in a march to demand justice for Christian Portillo, who was killed by Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies in July. His family is organizing the action on what would have been his 35th birthday.

Workers in Britain hit with layoffs, wage cuts

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON—Bosses in the United Kingdom are cutting jobs and wages of workers as the economic crisis deepens and the economy contracts.

Official unemployment in the three months prior to September stood at 1.82 million, or 5.7 percent, up by 140,000 from the previous quarter. Younger and older workers experienced the brunt of the job cuts. During the early 1980s, unemployment reached 11 percent. "A real pay squeeze is adding to the jobs crunch," commented John Philpott of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

The economy contracted by 0.5 percent in the third quarter. The Office for National Statistics said that September's was the seventh consecutive monthly drop, the longest run since 1980.

Retail sales are down 1.5 percent from last year. Prominent stores including Argos, Currys, Homebase, JJB Sports, Marks and Spencer, PC World, and Top Shop have recorded drops this year. Car sales have plummeted, falling in October at their fastest rate in 17 years, down 23 percent from a year ago.

Industrial production is also slowing. Auto production is hit hardest. Some 6,000 workers at BMW plants in Oxford and Swindon are to be laid off for four weeks in December, and their monthly pay packet cut by £250 (1£=$1.48). Truck maker Leyland has announced 250 job cuts and an extended Christmas shutdown. Nissan is working its flagship Sunderland plant on a three-day week.

Ford has cut back to a four-day week at its Transit van plant in Southampton, as has Land Rover at its plant in Solihull. Ford is also laying off workers at its plant at Bridgend, South Wales. Toyota has halted the night shift at its Derby works.

Jaguar has announced an extension of a voluntary redundancy offer to hundreds of workers at its plants in Merseyside and the Midlands. On top of 198 workers who have already taken a buyout, another 400 jobs will be cut. LDV, a Russian-owned van-making company near Birmingham is cutting 95 jobs.

The majority of cars built in the United Kingdom are sold abroad. Production cutbacks reflect not just the recession in the United Kingdom but the global economic slowdown. Germany, the largest economy in Europe, and Italy, the third biggest, are now officially in recession as is the whole of "Euroland," the countries that use the euro as their currency. Overall these economies contracted 0.2 percent in the three months from July to September on top of a similar contraction the previous quarter.

Announcements of job cuts and short-time working are becoming a feature of news bulletins. Some 20,000 job losses were recorded in the United Kingdom in the week ending November 14. Among the major companies announcing job cuts were BT, the largest UK telecommunications company, shedding 10,000 jobs, 6 percent of its global workforce. Virgin Media has announced cuts of 2,200 jobs from its 14,600 total. Construction company Taylor Wimpey has axed 1,000.

GlaxoSmithKline, the biggest UK pharmaceutical company, is to close its manufacturing site in Dartford, near London, with the loss of more than 500 jobs. Yell, the company which owns Yellow Pages and yell.com, is cutting 1,300 jobs. Tetrad, a furniture maker employing 500 people in Preston, has moved to a four-day week. Budelpack COSi, a cosmetics plant in Maesteg, South Wales, is cutting 200 jobs. Altogether, the number of manufacturing jobs has fallen to the lowest figure in 30 years.

House prices are also continuing to decline, down by around 15 percent from a year earlier. "Prices are now falling at a faster pace than in the recession of the early '90s," reported Simon Rubinsohn, chief economist at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Home repossessions rose 71 percent in the second quarter from a year earlier. Individual bankruptcies are up 7 percent.

In an attempt to slow the contraction, on November 6 the Bank of England cut short-term interest rates by 1.5 percent, from 4.5 percent to 3 percent. The move is the latest in a series of measures taken by the government and the bank to address the financial crisis and economic downturn. Last month, the government announced a £500 billion package to shore up banks hit by the international financial crisis.

Despite the measures aimed at increasing liquidity, stimulating interbank lending, and recapitalizing major banks, lending continues to stall. "I can't borrow the money . . . because nobody's lending," Nicholas Goss, managing director of Goss Components, which makes car components, told the *Times*.

Trade union officials have for the most part charted a course of collaboration and accommodation with the bosses and the government. The Trades Union Congress has unveiled an "economic action plan." Congratulating the prime minister for showing "global leadership," TUC general secretary Brendan Barber called for cuts in interest rates and government-issued "green bonds" aimed at a "green industrial revolution" which, he said, would "create jobs and help rebalance the economy."

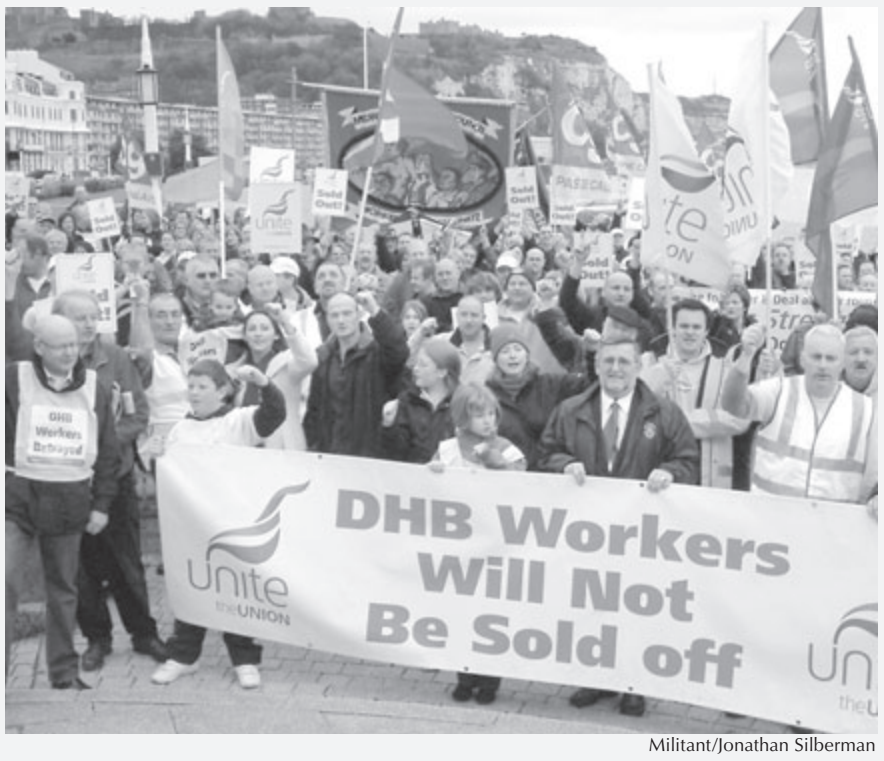
Unite general secretary Derek Simpson argues a nationalist "defend British jobs" course describing as "an absolute scandal" a decision by companies contracted to build a new power station at Staythorpe to employ foreign labor. "The country is in the grip of a credit crunch. . . . It will be a disgrace if UK workers are shut out from building their own power stations," Simpson said.

Leaders of the GMB union hailed a decision by 2,500 workers at JCB to agree to their recommendation to accept a £50 per week pay cut. The employers were threatening to cut 350 jobs. They were then stunned when, hard on the heels of the pay cut, JCB announced a cut of 400 jobs.

Meanwhile leaders of the Public and Commercial Services Union called off a scheduled strike by 260,000 in protest of a below-inflation 2.45 percent pay offer. Inflation was, at the time, running at 5.2 percent.

A campaign of days of strike action over outsourcing of work by port workers at Dover in Kent is ongoing.

Port workers in England prepare strike



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

DOVER, England—Hundreds of port workers and their supporters rallied November 15 in this coastal town 75 miles southeast of London. Unite union members were planning a 48-hour strike November 18–19 against company moves to transfer their employment to the private sector, threatening their jobs and wages. On the march were delegations of port workers, including from Calais, France, as well as Thamesport and Tilbury in southeast England.

—JONATHAN SILBERMAN

Guantánamo prisoner trials

Continued from front page

Leon ruled that Bensayah was "more likely than not" planning to fight in Afghanistan.

Justice Department spokesman Peter Carr said the department disagreed with the decision to release the remaining five men. The government has not announced whether it will appeal.

The six Algerians were all residents of Bosnia when they were arrested in late 2001 and accused of joining a plot to bomb the U.S. Embassy in Sarajevo. However, the Justice Department dropped the claim last month without explanation.

The ruling represents the first of more than 200 habeas corpus suits slated to be heard since the Supreme Court decided July 12 that Guantánamo prisoners have the constitutional right to challenge their detentions.

The Justice Department has filed motions to stop more than 100 of these cases.

The prisoners are denied basic rights necessary to a fair trial. In addition to the preponderance of evidence rule the trials allow hearsay and secret evidence. The defendants are not allowed to be in the courtroom during the habeas corpus review; they are only allowed telephone access from Guantánamo for non-classified parts.

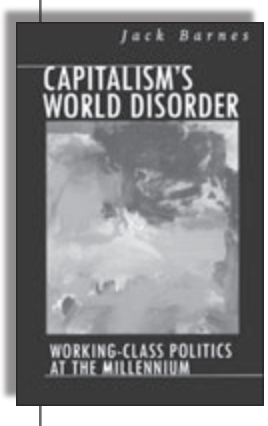
Another federal judge, Richard Urbana, ordered the release of 17 Uighurs from Guantánamo in October after the government conceded that they were not "enemy combatants." Uighers are an oppressed nationality in western China who are mostly Muslim. The Justice Department is appealing the decision.

The U.S. government plans to try up to 80 of the remaining 255 Guantánamo prisoners by a military commission under rules established by Congress in 2006. In these tribunals, the judge and jury are military personnel appointed by the Pentagon and statements extracted through some forms of torture are permitted.

President-elect Barack Obama reiterated his stance November 15 to eventually close the prison, which has become a political liability for Washington in face of exposures of the inhumane conditions there.

The U.S. military stopped sending prisoners to Guantánamo some time ago. Instead they have been sent to other countries. Based on a 2001 presidential order authorizing indefinite detentions for "terror" suspects, an estimated 25,000 are held in prisons in Iraq and 14,000 in Afghanistan.

Capitalism's World Disorder
Working-Class Politics at the Millennium
By Jack Barnes
Price: $24.00



The social devastation and financial panic, the coarsening of politics, the cop brutality, the militarization of daily life and acts of imperialist aggression—all are products not of something gone wrong with capitalism but of its lawful workings. Yet the future can be changed by the united struggle of workers and farmers increasingly conscious of their power to transform the world.

www.pathfinderpress.com

Rightists seize airports, gov't offices in Thailand

BY RUTH GRAY

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Supporters of the right-wing People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) took control of portions of the Suvarnabhumi airport in Bangkok, Thailand, November 25, forcing the government to cancel all flights. Rightist protesters also took over the abandoned Don Mueang Airport where the government has set up temporary offices.

PAD supporters had been occupying Government House in Bangkok since August 26 to press their demand that the government resign. PAD leaders accuse the ruling People's Power Party of being a puppet of former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who was overthrown in a military coup in September 2006.

PAD was formed that same year and is backed by powerful figures within royalist and military circles. It has mobilized thousands of middle-class Thais into the streets, accusing Thaksin of corruption and vote buying in rural areas. The PAD says the election process gives too much weight to rural toilers, who it describes as "ignorant." The party advocates having only 30 percent of parliament directly elected by the people, with the remainder appointed.

Thaksin, a wealthy businessman, formed the Thai Rak Thai (Thais Loves Thais) party in the wake of the 1997 financial crisis in Asia. His party won the 2001 elections with promises to relieve the crisis in the countryside. Two-thirds of Thailand's 65 million people live in the countryside. Many grow rice for the export market. Thailand is the largest rice exporter in the world.

Thaksin sought to consolidate support among rural toilers by creating a program known as the 1 million baht (US$30,000) village fund. Under the program villagers could apply for low-interest loans. They also benefited from

Antigovernment protester holds portrait of King Bhumibol Adulyadej during rightist-led demonstration at prime minister's temporary offices in abandoned Don Mueang international airport in Bangkok on November 25.

cheaper health care and some land redistribution to the landless.

At the same time the Thaksin government escalated attacks on Malay Muslims fighting for autonomy in southern Thailand, leaving an estimated 1,700 people dead. In Thailand 94 percent of the population is classified as Buddhist while in the south it is 80 percent Malay Muslim.

Since the coup Thaksin has been living in exile to avoid corruption charges. In October of this year he was found guilty by the Thai courts and sentenced in absentia to two years in jail.

Immediately following the 2006 coup against Thaksin the military received backing from Thailand's king, Bhumibol Adulyadej, the official head of state. The king's status is reinforced by the constitution, which bans criticism of the monarchy.

In Washington, the coup was met with condemnation since Thaksin was a staunch supporter of the U.S.-led "war on terrorism."

After 15 months of military rule new elections were held in December 2007. The majority voted to restore Thaksin's renamed PPP to the government, led by Thaksin's political ally Samak Sundaravej.

This September Samak was dismissed from office by the courts for violation of the constitution when he accepted payment for appearing on a TV cooking show. He has been replaced as prime minister by Thaksin's brother-in-law, Somchai Wongsawat.

Fourth Venezuela International Book Fair

Continued from front page

sessions included Venezuelan minister of culture Héctor Soto and his Ecuadoran counterpart, Galo Mora.

Renowned Cuban authors Nancy Morejón and Miguel Barnett read from their works in another presentation.

The political highlight of the fair was a meeting to launch Fidel Castro's new book, *La Paz en Colombia* (Peace in Colombia). It attracted more than 500 people. In the book Castro draws the lessons of the Cuban Revolution on the need to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist class and challenges the prolonged guerrilla warfare strategy and hostage-taking tactics of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Speakers included Cuban minister of culture Abel Prieto and José Arbesú, the deputy head of the International Relations Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba.

A featured program at the fair was the three-day International Conference of Booksellers held at the Fine Arts Museum in the park. Some 80 people attended the opening session where the panel included Marisela Guevara, president of Venezuela's National Book Center; Pedro Pérez; and Rosa Fernández, president of Distribuídora Venezolana, the government-run book distribution network.

A selection of the more than 100 people who run the 52 outlets of Librerías del Sur attended this booksellers conference. They came from as far as Puerto Ayacucho in Amazonas state. Several had spent a few months studying in Cuba in recent years. Also present were owners and managers of privately owned bookstores in Venezuela, Colombia, Mexico, Argentina, Uruguay, and the United States.

Casa del ALBA—a cultural project initiated by the Cuban and Venezuelan governments that promotes the publication and distribution of books and music in several countries in Latin America, Central America, and the Caribbean—set up a spacious tent with one side devoted to books and the other to hosting several programs every day. It was a pole of attraction at the fair. ALBA stands for the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas.

A forum called "World Conjuncture: present . . . future?"—sponsored by Casa del ALBA—featured Venezuelan writer Luis Britto and U.S. Socialist Workers Party candidate for president in 2008, Róger Calero. Explaining that capitalism "is in a crisis of severe internal contradiction and anarchy of production," Britto predicted that there will be some peaceful transitions to socialism, but that some will be attacked because the capitalists never give up power voluntarily. He said that in the new revolutionary epoch, "the new socialism will be based on ecology and austerity."

Calero spoke about his experiences meeting fighting workers during the U.S. election campaign and participating in actions against the deportation of immigrants, and his conviction that socialist revolution in the United States is possible. Asked by one participant about what happened to the "American dream," Calero replied that it never existed, recalling how Malcolm X spoke of the "American nightmare." When the same person asked whether the election of Barack Obama would lead to socialism, Calero responded, "Imperialism's stripes don't change from one election to another."

Many panels and presentations were sponsored by Monte Avila and El Perro y La Rana (The Dog and the Frog), two publishers that are part of the Venezuelan government's ambitious book production operation.

Pathfinder Press joined Monte Avila in presenting a panel to launch the Monte Avila edition of *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* by Mary-Alice Waters. Pathfinder also organized a presentation to launch issue number 8 of *Nueva Internacional*, which features the article "Revolution, Internationalism, and Socialism: The Last Year of Malcolm X."

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

25 CENTS

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

December 9, 1983

The recent congress of the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP) received scant attention from the news media, including most of the Black and left press. Yet for Blacks and for the working class as a whole it was a significant gathering and represented an advance in the consolidation and clarification of a revolutionary Black vanguard.

Many organizations in the Black community, as in the working class as a whole, have politically retreated. They have failed to lead a response to the racist, antilabor offensive of the government and employers. This has led to some setbacks, particularly for the trade unions, some demoralization, and increased polarization.

At the same time, anger in the Black community and among all working people is rising. The willingness to fight back exists. The problem is forging a leadership capable of leading that process.

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

December 8, 1958

On Oct. 23, 1956, the Hungarian revolution began. Even after the Soviet troops crushed armed resistance to bureaucratic despotism, the workers persisted in their fight. Their heroic general strike lasted into the middle of December.

What were the aims of this great working class struggle? To open the door to capitalist restoration and U.S. imperialist control, say the Stalinist bureaucrats. "Liberation from Communism," say the State Department propagandists. Both sides slander the revolution.

Nicolas Krasso's article printed on this page is a reminder that the Hungarian masses fought above all for themselves. They wished to retain the established property forms, institute workers' democracy, and end Red Army occupation. They wanted the right to determine their own fate as a nation.

THE MILITANT

Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

December 9, 1933

The Seventh Pan-American conference convened December 3 at Montevideo, Uruguay with twenty-one nations represented. The American delegation arrived prior to the conference to line up puppet delegates and to attempt to iron out and side-track some of the most difficult problems that are sure to upset the conference if they are thrown open for discussion on the floor.

It is convened at a time when the economic life of Latin America is almost at a standstill as a result of the crisis within the leading imperialist nations. The leading capitalist nations, such as the United States, have attempted to shift part of the crisis burden onto the lesser nations of Latin America.

At Montevideo, there will be a meeting of unequals. The conference is an American Imperialist set-up for the benefit of American imperialism.

Cuban revolutionary: 'Angola made me grow'

René González, from U.S. prison, recalls experience opposing apartheid invasion

René González Sehwerert, 52, is one of five Cuban revolutionaries who have been jailed in the United States for 10 years. He was sentenced to 15 years on charges of "general conspiracy" and "failure to register as a foreign agent" as part of the U.S. government's frame-up accusations that the Cuban Five—as they are known internationally—were part of a "spy ring" in Miami.

Born in Chicago Aug. 13, 1956, González returned with his family to Cuba in 1961. Starting in 1977 he spent two years in Angola as one of the Cuban volunteers who helped defeat the invasions of that country by the racist apartheid regime in South Africa.

The following interview with González was printed in the June 13, 2005, edition of *Trabajadores*, a daily newspaper in Cuba, under the title "Angola made me grow."

When González mentions the crime in Barbados he is referring to the 1976 bombing of a Cuban airliner, killing all 73 aboard, moments after taking off from the Barbados airport. The bombing was organized by CIA-trained Cuban counterrevolutionaries Luis Posada Carriles and Orlando Bosch.

In April 1974 the dictatorship in Portugal was overthrown in the "Carnation Revolution," a coup by young military officers that sparked a mass popular upsurge.

Translation from Spanish is by the *Militant*.

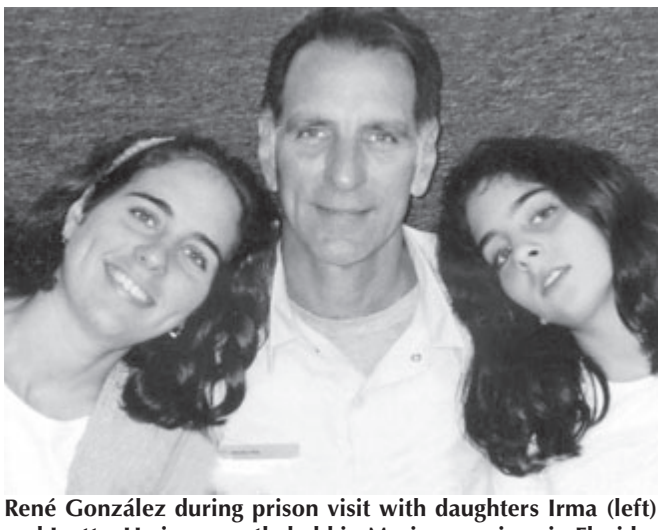
❖

René González Sehwerert's youthful spirit and internationalist sentiment came together in his life as a soldier during Angola's war of liberation. *Trabajadores* reveals the feelings and motivations that brought one of our antiterrorist heroes to the African continent.

"I don't know if in the mid-70s I would have needed too many reasons for carrying out an internationalist mission. It was in the air. Che's legacy was germinating. The empire's crimes wounded Cubans' collective sensibility with each news story of new aggression or of the latest military dictatorship making its debut or by directly wounding our own flesh with crimes like the one in Barbados.

"Under those circumstances, the Carnation Revolution shook the Portuguese colonial empire like a breath of fresh air and opened up the doors to sovereignty for parts of Africa with which we were joined through centuries of exploitation.

"When once again they turned to crime with the support and complicity of those who today try to give us lessons about human rights—apartheid South Africa had attacked the beginnings of a nation just starting to crawl in Angola—the Cuban people shook with anger. Trembling with anger myself and thanks to the help of some officials I managed to be included in the unit of my regiment that was assigned to carry out a mission. That's how I joined a tank battalion, as a gunner in an artillery crew, a day after having finished my three years of General Military Service.



René González during prison visit with daughters Irma (left) and Ivette. He is currently held in Marianna prison in Florida.

Two years in Cabinda

"After two months of training, the T-34 Tank Battalion arrived on the coast of Cabinda in March 1977. Our unit did not participate in combat activities; we were only a part of a defensive line shortly before returning, when the initial enthusiasm for the war on the part of the young troops had calmed down a bit, faced with the imminence of returning home.

"Our initial amazement seeing the lush African landscape was followed by contact with an unknown culture and way of life. I was struck by the nobility, humility, and lack of malice of the Angolans, whom centuries of misery and exploitation had not managed to turn into predators. The word of any one of those peasants was worth more than the constitutions of all of the "superior" countries that had gone to "civilize" that continent.

"An experience that had a big impact on me was seeing the hunger in the faces and bodies of the children. The look on their faces made you shiver. Through some tacit and silent agreement, each one of our two hundred combatants agreed, from the first day, to give up a portion of their meager rations to feed a dozen children who would wait for us by the side of the road three times a day as we were taking food to a small group of troops deployed near their village.

"There are two juxtaposed moments that will forever be etched in my memory: those happy faces returning to their village and witnessing how a neighboring family was making a small coffin.

"In the absence of combat, my stay in Angola coincided with the battle for the ninth grade. This task was taken on with enthusiasm; rustic classrooms were built in each company's area. I'm thankful to this assignment for my reconciliation with the lessons of mathematics, which I was able to teach. I had the satisfaction of seeing a group of officers and soldiers return to the homeland with a certificate showing the grade level they had conquered.

"After two years of vigilance and intense preparation for combat, in March 1979 the last members of the T-34 Battalion of the Motorized Infantry Regiment of Cabinda boarded the ships that returned us to Cuba, with the satisfaction of having done our job and gone through a unique experience.

René González at age 21 in Angola, 1977, where more than 300,000 Cuban volunteers helped defeat U.S.-backed South African apartheid regime's invasion there in the 1970s and '80s. He is one of five Cuban revolutionaries imprisoned in U.S. jails on frame-up charges since 1998.

"On the Zenda hillock we left behind a renewed unit and a mountain of life experiences.

" I never imagined that another experience—like the one I'm living now—would be able to go beyond the intensity and weight of the Angolan one in my upbringing and my life. That's the value that I see in my two years in Cabinda.

The work of imperfect men

"That internationalist mission was the realization of a longing that made me grow as a human being. It wasn't all rose-colored. I had positive and negative experiences under difficult conditions. There I lived moments of tremendous joy and others of profound sadness; camaraderie was mixed with conflicts, I disagreed and I was in agreement, I got along with some and not with others, I made good friends or, simply, *compañeros*.

"But each and every one of these experiences taught me something new and made me grow. I have gone back to that experience to resolve later problems, and each one of those combatants—perhaps like me at that moment without fully recognizing it—was a part of something much bigger than any one of us or even of our battalion.

"The Angolan experience taught me that the most beautiful works are accomplished by imperfect men, each one of us a short impulse in history: that continual righting of wrongs that began with the first human injustice.

"However, the role of Cuba in this epic poem was more than a short impulse. The push that the fight for Angola's sovereignty gave to the struggle against colonialism—that social cancer upon which opulence was built that today passes itself off as the civilized world—didn't stop until it reached the Cape of Good Hope, completely destroying the myth that was invented to enable them to carry out their policies of subjugation.

"I think that it will be some time before humanity understands Cuba's altruism in Angola. In the individualistic world that is imposed on us, what someone has called "sarcastic skepticism" corrodes and immobilizes the collective consciousness forged in the masses, as a means of domination by those who build their fortunes on them.

"But history is already written, at least up to this point, and the epic deed of our people in Africa is part of that. As it will be when all of the peoples united as one have sunk the bourgeois empire, erasing, at last, hunger from the face of the last child who has suffered from it."

Recommended reading

United States vs. the Cuban Five
A Judicial Coverup
by Rodolfo Dávalos Fernández

"From start to finish, the proceedings were tainted, corrupt, null and void, vindictive. Every right of the accused to 'due process' was flouted." Tells the story of the five Cuban revolutionaries and the fight for their release. **$22**

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution
by Jack Barnes

A book about prospects for revolution in the United States, where the political capacities of workers and farmers are today as utterly discounted by the ruling powers as were those of Cuba's working people—of which the five Cuban working-class fighters are outstanding examples, now serving on the front ranks of the class struggle in the U.S. **$10**

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Socialists discuss world crisis, transformation of the working class

Militant/Dave Wulp

For the first time in the lives of some four generations, the question of proletarian revolution is being posed, Jack Barnes (inset), Socialist Workers Party national secretary, said at November 22 meeting.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEWARK, New Jersey—For the first time in the lives of some four generations, workers in the United States are living through years in which the question before them, practically and concretely, is to build toward a proletarian revolution, said Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, at a November 22 public meeting at the Robert Treat Hotel here.

In face of today's accelerating contraction of capitalist production and employment, Barnes said, it is this perspective—the working-class fight to take power—that communists must explain through the *Militant*, through the 2009 SWP election campaigns for state and local office, and in other ways. And it is to this course, he said, that revolutionary-minded workers and youth will be politically attracted, and the basis on which they will be won to the party and the Young Socialists.

The event, titled "The Crisis Has Barely Begun! . . . and the Workers' Fight to End the Wages System is Posed," was sponsored by the Newark and New York Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists. Some 375 workers and youth came from throughout the United States as well as from Australia, Canada, France, Iceland, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. *Militant* editor Sam Manuel and SWP National Committee member Diana Newberry, a meat packer in Des Moines, chaired the program.

Mary-Alice Waters, a member of the SWP National Committee and editor of the Marxist magazine *New International,* also spoke. Having just returned from the Venezuela International Book Fair in Caracas, Waters described the public presentation there of the pamphlet *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?*

The pamphlet answers *yes* to that question—the question that was the featured debate at the central forum during the book fair held in 2007. The discussion at that event led Pathfinder Press to publish the title, centering on Waters's talk, which opened the five-day forum.

"This year we returned to this debate in a very interesting way," said Waters. The pamphlet was launched in Caracas jointly by Pathfinder and the Venezuelan publishing house Monte Avila, which printed and distributed its own edition. Monte Avila made 1,000 free copies available to book fair participants and the title has been placed for sale in bookstores throughout Venezuela.

The question under discussion, said Waters, is not just the possibility of socialist revolution in the United States, but anywhere in the world. "There was more interest in what we had to say than at previous book fairs," she said, pointing to the more than 1,600 Pathfinder books and pamphlets sold at the fair—60 percent more than the previous year—including 320 copies of *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?;* 125 of issue number 8 of *Nueva Internacional*, featuring the article "Revolution, Internationalism, and Socialism: The Last Year of Malcolm X"; and 100 of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution.*

Book on Africa transformation

Waters said that Pathfinder's next book will be on the big economic and social changes taking place in Africa and the internationalist example of Cuba's socialist revolution. The book is based on 2005 and 2008 reporting trips to Equatorial Guinea that Waters and others took part in.

The working title had been *Imperial Plunder and the Transformation of Africa*. But the editors decided this should be changed, said Waters. There are many books about the imperialist plunder of Africa. This one, she said, is about how capitalism is transforming Africa today—as it always does, "dripping with blood and dirt from every pore," as Karl Marx wrote. And how, in the process, a working class is just beginning to be forged—a class capable of leading the fight for the social and economic advancement of the toilers throughout Africa.

The book will be available at the February 2009 Havana International Book Fair, as will *Habla Malcolm X* (Malcolm X Speaks), a new edition by the Cuban publishing house Ciencias Sociales of the book originally published by Pathfinder.

A political highlight of the Venezuela book fair was the presentation of *La paz en Colombia* (Peace in Colombia) by Cuban leader Fidel Castro. The book, said Waters, contrasts the longstanding course of the Cuban leadership—the revolutionary struggle for political power—to those political forces backing the "prolonged guerrilla warfare" course of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), including the FARC's treatment of prisoners and policy of taking and holding civilian hostages.

Meetings broadly sponsored by academic departments, professors, and student groups to discuss the book *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution* have taken place on campuses across the United States, the United Kingdom, and in other countries.

Waters described the upcoming opportunities to reach out with the book as part of participating in the upcoming international conference on José Martí, Benito Juárez, and Abraham Lincoln scheduled for May 17–19, 2009, in Monterrey, Mexico. As part of that event, Pathfinder will be making available for the first time ever a Spanish-language edition of the writings of Marx and Engels on the United States.

In December, Moisés Sío Wong, one of the Chinese-Cuban generals interviewed in *Our History Is Still Being Written*, together with Waters and Martín Koppel, who participated in interviewing the generals, will travel to Beijing, Shanghai, and other cities in China to present the newly published Chinese-language edition of *Our History Is Still Being Written.* "This is the first time in decades anything like this has been published in China," said Waters. The book presentations will be part of activities there to mark the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution.

The book "opens opportunities especially in Asia," noted Waters, pointing to the International Conference on Overseas Chinese that will take place in July 2009 in Auckland, New Zealand.

The experiences at the Venezuela book fair, in Equatorial Guinea, and in promoting revolutionary literature from Havana to Beijing show how a proletarian party reaches out to the world as an indispensable part of planting its feet firmly in the class struggle in the United States, said Waters.

This was also illustrated by the large, attractive displays on reaching out to the world through promotion of books like *Our History Is Still Being Written;* charts and articles explaining the roots and consequences for workers of the current economic crisis; announcements of the 2009 SWP mayoral campaigns; and lessons from the bourgeois "New Deal/War Deal" policies of the U.S. rulers during the depression years of the 1930s. This included a number of photos highlighting working-class resistance, such as women strikers occupying a Detroit lock factory in 1937 and sit-down strikers at a General Motors plant in Flint, Michigan, that year.

Proletarian revolution

In his talk, Barnes said capitalism is drawing working people into conditions like what the United States and the world entered into in 1929, the

Continued on page 9

Party-Building Fund

Continued from front page

ready exceed the $7,000 quota taken, with more pledges still to be collected, wrote John Naubert. A meeting there November 16 to celebrate the communist continuity of the SWP raised new contributions and pledges for the party-building fund. The featured speaker was James Harris, SWP candidate for mayor of Los Angeles.

"A combat party is a necessity for organizing the working class, so that workers can unite and act together in a centralized way to take power away from the capitalist class," Harris explained. "The working class can't take power through demagogy; the working class has to be conscious of its task."

Among those at the event was Elizabeth Mintz, a junior in Latin American history at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma. "What James Harris said is never taught in the schools and I hope more people can hear the socialist message," she said.

Readers who would like to contribute to the SWP Party-Building Fund should contact a local office listed on page 8.

$90,000 Socialist Workers Party Party-Building Fund

Fall 2008 ♦ Week 7 of 9

CITY	QUOTA	PAID	%
Seattle*	**$7,000**	**$7,198**	**103%**
San Francisco	**$13,000**	**$12,027**	**93%**
Des Moines, IA*	**$2,000**	**$1,806**	**90%**
Newark, NJ*	**$3,900**	**$3,512**	**90%**
Twin Cities**	**$6,600**	**$5,920**	**90%**
Houston	**$2,500**	**$2,190**	**88%**
Washington, D.C.*	**$4,800**	**$4,170**	**87%**
New York	**$15,500**	**$12,931**	**83%**
Philadelphia	**$3,500**	**$2,922**	**83%**
Atlanta*	**$8,500**	**$6,926**	**81%**
Miami	**$3,200**	**$2,607**	**81%**
Chicago*	**$9,000**	**$7,203**	**80%**
Boston	$2,800	$2,115	76%
Los Angeles*	$9,200	$6,475	70%
Other		$550	
Total	**$91,500**	**$78,552**	**86%**
Should be	**$90,000**	**$70,000**	**78%**

***raised goal, **raised goal twice**

Dialectical materialism and the struggle for socialism

Below is an excerpt from An Introduction to the Logic of Marxism, *one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for December. The book contains a series of lectures presented in 1942 by George Novack, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party, on materialist dialectics. The piece quoted is from the chapter "Formal logic and dialectics." Dialectical materialism, Novack explains, is a tool for workers and youth who seek to organize a proletarian revolutionary movement. By fighting to win political power, working people can break the constraints of the decaying capitalist system and open up the struggle for the next stage of human society, socialism.* *Copyright © 1969 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

Militant/Willie Cotton

Health-care workers, members of Service Employees International Union Local 1199, rally March 15, 2008 outside Kingsbridge Heights Rehabilitation Center in Bronx, New York. Dialectical materialism is indispensable weapon of working class in struggle against capital.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY GEORGE NOVACK

These lectures deal with the ideas of materialist dialectics, the logic of Marxism.

Has it struck you how exceptional a project this is? Here are members and sympathizers of a revolutionary political party under government persecution in the midst of World War II, the biggest war in world history. These industrial workers, these professional revolutionists, have come together, not to discuss matters and decide upon measures requiring immediate action, but for the purpose of studying a science which seems to be as remote as higher mathematics from everyday political struggle.

What a contrast to the malicious caricature of the Marxist movement deliberately drawn by capitalist hands! The possessing classes depict revolutionary socialists as demented individuals who delude themselves and others by fantastic visions of a workers' world. The capitalist rulers are like children who can't picture a world in which they don't exist and in which they aren't the central figures.

They claim to be guided by logic and by reason. Yet it takes only one look at the world today to determine who is irrational and who is sane: the capitalists or their revolutionary opponents. The present monarchs of society have run amok and are behaving like maniacs. They have plunged the world into mass murder for the second time in a quarter of a century; put the torch to civilization; and threaten to destroy along with themselves the rest of humanity. And the spokesmen for these unbalanced people presume to call us "crazy" and our struggle for socialism evidence of "unrealism."

No, the shoe is on the other foot. In fighting against the mad chaos of capitalism for a socialist system free from class exploitation and oppression, wars, crises, imperialist enslavement and barbarism, we Marxists are the most reasonable individuals alive. That is why, unlike all other social and political groupings, we take the science of logic so very seriously. Our logic is the indispensable instrument for prosecuting the struggle against capitalism and for socialism.

The logic of the materialist dialectic is, to be sure, quite different from the prevailing logic of the bourgeois world. Our method, like our ideas, is, as we propose to prove, more scientific, far more practical, and also far more "logical" than any other logic. We maintain with greater comprehension and comprehensiveness the fundamental principle of science that there exists an inner logic of relations throughout all reality and that the laws of this logic can be known and transmitted to others. The social world around us is only superficially senseless. There is method even in the madness of the capitalist class. Our task is to find out what the most general laws of that inner logic of nature, society, and the human mind are. While the bourgeoisie are losing their heads, we shall try to improve and to clarify ours.

We have excellent precedents for this kind of enterprise. During the early months of the First World War, Lenin, in exile at Berne, Switzerland, resumed his study of Hegel's logic simultaneously with developing his Bolshevik program of struggle against imperialist war. The impress of this theoretical work can be discerned in all his subsequent thinking, writing, and acting. Lenin prepared himself and his party for the coming revolutionary events by mastering dialectics. In the first months of the Second World War, while conducting the fight against the petty-bourgeois opposition in the Socialist Workers Party, Trotsky stressed time and again the crucial importance of the method of materialist dialectics in revolutionary socialist politics. His book, *In Defense of Marxism,* revolves around this theoretical axis.

Here, as in all our activities, we are guided by the leaders of scientific socialism who taught the dialectical truth that there is nothing so practical in proletarian politics as the right method of thought. That method can be only the method of materialist dialectics we are going to study.

Preliminary definition of logic

Logic is a science. Every science studies a particular kind of motion in its connections with other modes of material motion and seeks to discover the general laws and specific modes of that movement. Logic is the science of the thought process. Logicians investigate the activities of the thought process which goes on in human heads and formulate the laws, forms and interrelations of those mental processes.

Two main types of logic have arisen out of the two main stages in the development of the science of logic: formal logic and dialectics. These are the most highly developed forms of mental motion. They have as their function the conscious understanding of all forms of motion, including their own.

Although we are primarily interested in materialist dialectics, we shall not proceed at once to consider the dialectical method of reasoning. We shall approach dialectics indirectly by first examining the fundamental ideas of another kind of reasoning: the method of formal logic. As a method of thought, formal logic is the polar opposite of materialist dialectics.

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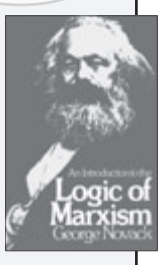

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EDITORIAL

Release Guantánamo prisoners

For the first time since Washington set up its infamous prison camp in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, a few detainees have had a hearing on the evidence against them in a civilian court. A federal judge decided November 20 that one of the six Algerians whose cases he reviewed, Belkacem Bensayah, should remain imprisoned, but said the others should be released.

Like the military tribunals themselves, the trial was closed to the media and public. The "evidence" was based on hearsay from secret sources. The accused were barred from the courtroom and only allowed telephone access to nonclassified parts of the trial. The judge ruled that Bensayah's indefinite detention was lawful because he was allegedly "more likely than not" planning to fight in Afghanistan.

Denial of the most basic right to a fair trial is just one example of Washington's inhumane treatment of prisoners at Guantánamo—and of the estimated 40,000 other prisoners the U.S. military holds throughout Afghanistan, Iraq, and in secret jails in other countries. These violations of rights have been carried out under the banner of the so-called war on terror. But they are ultimately aimed against working people in the United States.

Spying and curbing of constitutional protections have accelerated under the administrations of William Clinton and George Bush. This course has been carried out hand in hand with the assault against our wages, working conditions, and social entitlements. This will continue along with the unfolding economic crisis of capitalism, as the bosses and their government prepare to confront the inevitable resistance by our class that these assaults will provoke.

The widespread knowledge of the inhumane treatment of prisoners at Guantánamo has become a political liability for the U.S. ruling class, as the vast majority of working people around the world strongly oppose arbitrary detentions and the use of torture. President-elect Barack Obama stated November 15 his intention to eventually close the prison. The Bush administration has also spoken in favor of closing the camp and stopped sending new prisoners there some time ago.

Moves by Washington toward shutting down Guantánamo have nothing to do with providing more rights or better treatment to the tens of thousands of "terror" suspects in U.S. custody throughout the world. Simultaneously with talking about closing Guantánamo, Washington is expanding its prison camp at the U.S. airbase in Bagram, Afghanistan, where the crimes of its torturers can be more easily hidden from public view.

As part of defending the interests of our class worldwide, working people in the United States should demand the closing of Guantánamo and other U.S. "detention" centers and the release of all those incarcerated, as well as the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Afghanistan, Iraq, and all other countries where they are stationed.

Socialists discuss proletarian revolution

Continued from page 7

year of the stock market crash in the United States that triggered more than a decade of depression, social crisis, and intensified class conflict.

Socialism is not inevitable, he said, but proletarian revolutionary struggle is. Whether those struggles culminate in the working class and its allies taking state power will determine the prospects for the advance toward socialism—and the very survival of humanity.

"The greatest fight the working class has is to get rid of the picture of itself inculcated by the bourgeoisie," said Barnes.

Above all, a proletarian revolution opens the revolutionary transformation of the working class. Workers learn how to run society only through their own struggles, their own capacity for civil discussion and debate, their own shared labor. Out of this comes the political experience necessary to begin organizing the production of goods and running the government in the interests of the toiling majority.

The contraction world capitalism has entered into is not at its root a banking or credit crisis, Barnes said. Rather, it's the exhaustion of the possibility of using a greater and greater expansion of credit—including of winning those in the working class to becoming debtors to a degree never before seen in history—as a way of countering declining profit rates, and the capitalists' incapacity to find lucrative outlets for capacity-expanding investments in plant and equipment and increasing employment.

The unfolding social catastrophe, however, also produces working-class resistance. Barnes described the victory won last week when some 1,000 workers at the JBS Swift meatpacking plant in Hyrum, Utah, voted by a two-thirds majority to join the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), winning an organizing fight that had been going on since the 1980s.

When six Swift plants, including the one at Hyrum, were raided by immigration agents in 2006, UFCW officials never said a word in defense of workers at the Hyrum plant, since it was nonunion. That the Hyrum workers—despite the denial of simple working-class solidarity by top UFCW officials—nonetheless fought to join the union shows they have "a higher caliber of leadership than the entire labor movement officialdom," noted Barnes.

Bailouts no answer for workers

"When industry resumes production it will have the advantage of substantially less labor costs," wrote the editors of the *Wall Street Journal.* That wasn't a 2008 editorial, said Barnes, but one from 1931!

Like then, bankruptcies today will declare labor contracts null and void. "We're against the bailout of the auto companies," he said. "This is not how workers will defend themselves and other working people. They will defend themselves by realizing they don't have a union."

Only as the unions are transformed in struggle to "organize the organized," he said, will they be able on a broad scale to organize the unorganized.

Commenting on the expanding U.S. war in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Barnes noted that conditions there are very different from Iraq. The war will be decided and fought in Pakistan, already the sixth largest country in the world and growing. It will be a hard-fought war, one that Washington won't be able to win by transplanting its "surge" tactics from Iraq. The U.S. rulers are beginning to recognize that a volunteer U.S. army will not be enough to defend their imperialist class interests in the Middle East, Asia, and worldwide. Washington will be probing possibilities in the months and years ahead to reinstitute the draft.

Dave Prince, a member of the SWP in Atlanta, spoke about the launching of the Capital Fund for the coming year. Already $105,000 has been contributed. The Capital Fund accepts donations of $1,000 or more to continue the communist movement's publishing program.

A fund appeal by Ben Joyce, a leader of the Young Socialists, raised more than $18,000 to help the party continue its work. Discussion on the themes of the afternoon's talks continued at a sit-down dinner at the hotel and a lively party that followed.

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Citigroup bailout

Continued from front page

debt is repackaged and sold on the financial markets. It is no more reliable than any of the other complicated derivatives the financial wizards have invented, hoping to make huge profits without investing in production.

Credit card defaults are on the rise. An estimated $21 billion in credit card debts was written off in the first half of 2008 as more cardholders fell behind on their payments.

Meanwhile, owners of the Big Three U.S. auto companies, Chrysler, GM, and Ford, accompanied by the president of the United Auto Workers (UAW) union, came back empty-handed from their trip to Washington, D.C., to ask for $25 billion to avoid bankruptcy. But Democrats in Congress invited the auto giants to return by December 2 with more information on plans to make the auto industry more "competitive." A vote on a bailout could come on December 8.

The Big Three, with close to a quarter million workers, say they used up nearly $18 billion in cash reserves in the last three months as auto sales plummeted. GM alone has $43 billion in debt.

Conservative columnist Bill O'Reilly favors using the threat of bankruptcy as a club to convince auto workers to make steep wage and benefit concessions. "The equation should be: if the unions won't bend, we won't lend," O'Reilly wrote November 21 in the *New York Post.*

GM is already talking about delaying a $7 billion payment to a union retiree health fund, Bloomberg.com reported. The news service said the automaker is also pushing for the UAW to amend its 2007 contract, making further concessions on work rules.

A study by London's *Financial Times* estimates that more than 80,000 jobs were cut around the world from November 17 to 21. More than half the cuts were at Citigroup.

The layoffs come in the midst of the turn for the worse in the financial crisis. After thawing somewhat, according to the *New York Times*, once again "the credit markets seized up as confidence in the nation's financial system ebbed."

Claims for unemployment benefits in the United States rose to 542,000 last week, the highest level since July 1992. Unemployment is also climbing worldwide.

As new unemployment claims in the United States hit a 16-year high, some states are reducing benefits. Unemployment funds shrank in 32 states over the last year. At the same time, the number the U.S. government considers "long-term unemployed"—those jobless for 27 weeks or more—rose by 249,000 in October to 2.3 million.

While more workers are finding it harder to get jobs, local governments are proposing slashing social services or are already implementing cuts.

Pushing on a string

The hundreds of billions of dollars that Washington and other imperialist governments have poured into banks and other financial institutions in hopes of staving off the crisis has been like pushing on a string, what the capitalists sometimes call a "liquidity trap." It's not that the banks and corporations don't have access to enough money. They are not willing to take the risk of loaning or borrowing it.

In September capitalist investors pulled $22 billion out of U.S. equity mutual funds and $24 billion from bonds.

Standard & Poor's 500 stock index was down 52 percent on November 21 from its peak in October 2007. Whatever the momentary ups and down, some $8.3 trillion in stock market wealth has evaporated in the last 13 months. Hedge funds cut their stock holdings by almost two-thirds from a year ago.

The sales of gold coins and bars, however, reached their highest levels in more than a decade. According to the World Gold Council, $6.5 billion was spent on 232 tons of gold coins and bars in the third quarter of 2008, a 121 percent increase compared to the same period a year ago. Gold refineries and government mints are working at "full throttle" to keep up with demand, said the London *Financial Times* even before the latest figures were released.

"I have never seen a market like this in my 33-year career," said Jeremy Charles, chairman of the London Bullion Market Association. "The gold refineries cannot produce enough bars."